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Message Text

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15
ACTION EA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CU-04 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10

L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SPC-03 SS-20

USIA-15 ACDA-19 IO-14 DRC-01 /130 W
---------- 061875
R 240757Z OCT 73
FM AMEMBASSY BANGKOK
INFO SECSTATE WASHDC 7630

C O N F I D E N T I A L BANGKOK 16509

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS : PGOV, TH
SUBJECT : THE CHANGE IN BANGKOK AS SEEN FROM THE NORTH

FOLLOWING TEL SENT BANGKOK FOR ACTION FROM CHIANG MAI, 20 OCT 73, REPEATED NOW FOR YOUR INFO:

QUOTE

C O N F I D E N T I A L CHIANG MAI 372

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PGOV, TH
SUBJECT: THE CHANGE IN BANGKOK AS SEEN FROM THE NORTH.

POLLING OUR CONTACTS HERE AMONG CIVIL SERVANTS, THE MILITARY, EDUCATORS AND BUSINESSMEN, WE COME UP WITH THE FOLLOWING ATTITUDES TOWARDS THE CHANGE OF GOVERNMENT IN BANGKOK:

1. MOST VIEW THE CHANGE FOR THE BETTER AND BELIEVE THE AMOUNT OF BLOOD SHED SHOULD PREVENT SUCH POWER FROM EVER AGAIN BECOMING SO CENTRALIZED. MANY HERE HAD CHILDREN OR PUPILS INVOLVED IN THE SKIRMISHING IN BANGKOK. A FEW COMMUNITY LEADERS WHO ALWAYS DISLIKED THE REGIME BUT NEVER OFFERED ANY CONCRETE OPPOSITION NOW FEEL A BIT GUILTY THAT IT TOOK THE STUDENTS TO HAVE THE COURAGE OF THEIR ELDERS' CONVICTIONS.
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2. THE KING'S HANDLING OF THE SITUATION IS MUCH ADMIRED.
MANY STORIES NOW CIRCULATING ABOUT HIS STRONG OFFSTAGE MOVES.
BPP ALSO CAME OUT AS HEROES. CHIANG MAI GOVERNOR ASA AND POLICE
PRAISED FOR THEIR CALM TEMPERAMENTS DURING VOLATILE SITUATION HERE.

3. NARONG IS THE VILLAIN IN THE PIECE. STORIES OF HIS IN-
VOLVEMENT IN ATTACKS ON STUDENTS, TRUE OR NOT, COUPLED WITH
DISTASTE FOR BIFGO PERFORMANCE AND BELIEF NARONG WAS BEING
GROOMED AS FUTURE PM MADE HIM PRIME TARGET OF ANGER. SOME
PEOPLE TOLD US THEY WERE SAD TO SEE THANOM GO IN SUCH A WAY,
THAT THEY CONSIDERED HIM BASICALLY A GOOD MAN WHOSE DOWNFALL
WAS CAUSED BY AN INEPT ARROGANT SON.

4. MANY OPPOSITION EX-MP'S IN THE NORTH ARE ELATED WITH THE
IDEA OF NEW ELECTIONS AND ARE ALREADY TALKING ABOUT RUNNING FOR
OFFICE AGAIN. THEY SEE A GOOD CHANCE FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A
WORKABLE PARLIAMENTARY SYSTEM AND HOPE THAT MORE THAI WILL NOW
GET INVOLVED IN THE POLITICAL PROCESS. A FEW EDUCATORS VOICED FEARS
THAT FOLLOWERS OF PRAPHAT MIGHT ORGANIZE A POLITICAL PARTY WHICH,
IF IT WON A FUTURE ELECTION, COULD BRING PRAPHAT BACK TO POWER
LEGALLY.

5. THE MILITARY UP HERE ARE EITHER NON-COMMITTAL OR CAUTIOUSLY
OPTIMISTIC ABOUT THE SANYA GOVERNMENT. NONE VOICE STRONG
DISPLEASURE AT THE TURN OF EVENTS. SOME JUNIOR OFFICERS,
HOWEVER, COMMENTED CYNICALLY THAT THROUGHOUT THAI HISTORY
CIVILIAN GOVERNMENTS HAVE FAILED AND THAT IT MIGHT BE JUST A
MATTER OF TIME BEFORE THE MILITARY WOULD HAVE TO INTERVENE AGAIN.

6. WHILE PEOPLE ARE PROUD OF STUDENTS' SUCCESS AND SACRIFICES,
VIEW REMAINS THAT STUDENTS SHOULD NOW ASSUME A MORE PASSIVE ROLE
AND NOT DICTATE TERMS TO THE OLDER GENERATION. STUDENTS
CONSIDERED IMPATIENT AND INCAPABLE OF GUARANTEEING LONG-TERM
STABILITY AS A POWER BLOC. STUDENTS LANGUAGE HAS SHOCKED MANY
COMMUNITY LEADERS HERE, WHO REMAIN PLEASED WITH THE NEW
GOVERNMENT BUT ARE ALSO A BIT APPREHENSIVE ABOUT THE YOUNG
PROFANE ELEMENT WHICH HELPED USHER IT IN.
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